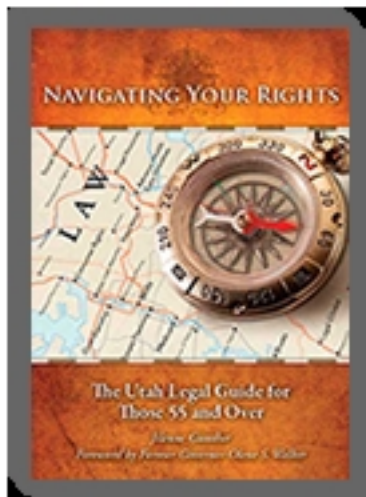


New Legal Guide for Those 55 and Over

Written by Elizabeth Sollis, Public Information Officer
Friday, 14 October 2011 09:03



Utah Division of Aging & Adult Services released a new book today that will help senior and caregivers be better equipped to fight exploitation, fraud and other forms of elder abuse. *Navigating Your Rights: The Utah Legal Guide for Those 55 and Over* is sponsored by the Bank of American Fork and Ballard Spahr and has received praise by experts in elder issues from around the country, including the director of the National Association of Adult Protective Services, the Executive Director of Utah Alzheimer's Association, and the whistle-blowing grandson of beloved philanthropist and Alzheimer's inflicted Brooke Astor.

"This book will give seniors and their caregivers in Utah a tool unlike any other available to understand the ways they or their loved ones may be, or are being, exploited and give them the tools to fight it," said Jilene Gunther, the book's author and Legal Services Developer for Utah's Division of Aging and Adult Services.

Navigating Your Rights: The Utah Legal Guide for Those 55 and Over is comprised of eleven chapters, three of which address financial exploitation. It covers 55+ subjects and answers over 200 legal questions often asked by seniors and caregivers.

According to a study (conducted by Gunther) of cases reported to Utah Adult Protective

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Services, Utah seniors are being exploited out \$7.7 million a year, unreported cases push that number up as high as \$339 million per year (almost \$1 million a day). What is more alarming is that those with Alzheimer's (and other mental impairments) lose 78% more than the average victim. 39% of victims of financial abuse have Alzheimer's or some related mental impairment.

"As we age we have more concerns about fraud. To avoid the pitfalls of making ill-informed decisions, it is essential that we empower ourselves through education in this aging game. This book makes the law simple to understand and navigate," said Former Utah Governor Olene Walker, who wrote the book's foreword

Utah is at the forefront of this alarming issue and can offer practical solutions for seniors across the country. "The most critical way to fight exploitation is educating seniors on how to prevent exploitation," said Kathleen Quinn, Director of National Association of Adult Protective Services. "Utah is leading the way by studying the patterns of how these criminals are accessing and stealing senior's assets and then warning seniors through their groundbreaking book."

Caregivers and seniors can receive a free copy of the book by contacting Utah Division of Aging & Adult Services, 1-877-424-4640, visiting <http://legalguide55.utah.gov> (to order, read, or download a copy), visiting a Utah public library or at the Bank of American Fork.